

SHALER NORTH HILLS LIBRARY  
SCRIPT FINAL

**Narration:** The National Medal for Museum and Library Services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exceptional ways. Shaler North Hills Library director Sharon McRae and community member Janet Miller traveled to Washington from Glenshaw, Pennsylvania to receive the national medal and spoke to IMLS about how the library impacts the community.

**Sharon McRae:** The Shaler North Hills Library is owned and operated by Shaler Township and we opened in September of 1942, two rooms, 3,000 volumes. Three additions later, we're now at 24,000 square feet and 130,000 items.

**Janet Miller:** Well, some of the programs that the library provides. I want to always start back because I think of the very youngest, the moms coming in with infants for story time and for interaction through many of the toddler programs. But then it goes on straight through the book clubs that they have and anybody can be part of these book clubs. The art shows that are provided. So you can get to walk into that and enjoy art on the walls. You can get a book. You can be part of a book club. You can rent your DVDs. There's a program every day, morning, noon and evenings usually to fulfill just about any need of a member of that community.

**Sharon McRae:** The community built the library. And so, it should reflect who they are and how they're changing. And the community has called upon us to provide these venues of change. We had a local artist who said "Boy there's not a lot of places that we can go to show our work." And so we created an art gallery. We do an art show. We connect folks and their creative side with art inspiration. And so, it is more than books.

**Janet Miller:** Issues that are met by this library can range anywhere from the early literacy, which this library is extremely involved in through issues of tax assessment and the social security issues and that. They provide programming and lawyers and all types of personnel to come into this library that any question that you have can be answered.

**Sharon McRae:**

And we're out in the community quite a bit asking people well what do you want to see at the library? Or if they come in and they say we're having trouble with our assessment, we want to appeal our property assessment and how can you help us? And so, because we provide online access and we have a close relationship with the township manager and some various partners. They were able to help people kind of create a plan to appeal their assessments. And so we were a big part of that piece.

**Janet Miller:**

You want to know anything, you want to get anything, you've got to come to the Shaler North Hills Library.

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**Sharon McRae:** Early literacy programs are at the core of what we do. That birth through five age, we know through studies and you hear all sorts of research that those are the times where the kids, they're just like sponges. And so we provide a variety, like a package of programs for them. So we have the story times, but we also have kid aerobics. Or we have little artists where we they can create things. Or there's a dance program and they learn to shake, rattle and roll with various instruments. And we also have a counting sheep, which is a math concept program for little kids. And we also have our discovery kids program, which is a science program for them. The library is a "Family Place Library," which is a national designation. We were trained in New York to serve directly these little kids, but their caregivers as well, their parents. And so at the core of that program is the parent/child workshop. And you bring in toys for the appropriate age levels and you also bring in community experts maybe on nutrition or on movement or on health issues, so that the parents can talk to these folks while their kids are engaged in imagination play where they dress up or they play with the kitchen or various things. And so, we've really taken that program to heart and have expanded it with those other programs that we provide.

**Sharon McRae:** The role we play in the future of our community is ever changing. And we would expect that the community would dictate to us how the library is going to change. And the Shaler North Hills Library is that hub for our community. And so, that's where our role is. And our role is to provide information and resources, but in a human way that connects each other.